

***How Demography Foretold the Arab Spring:  
Age Structure and the Chances for Liberal Democracy  
in North Africa and the Middle East***

**Richard Cincotta**

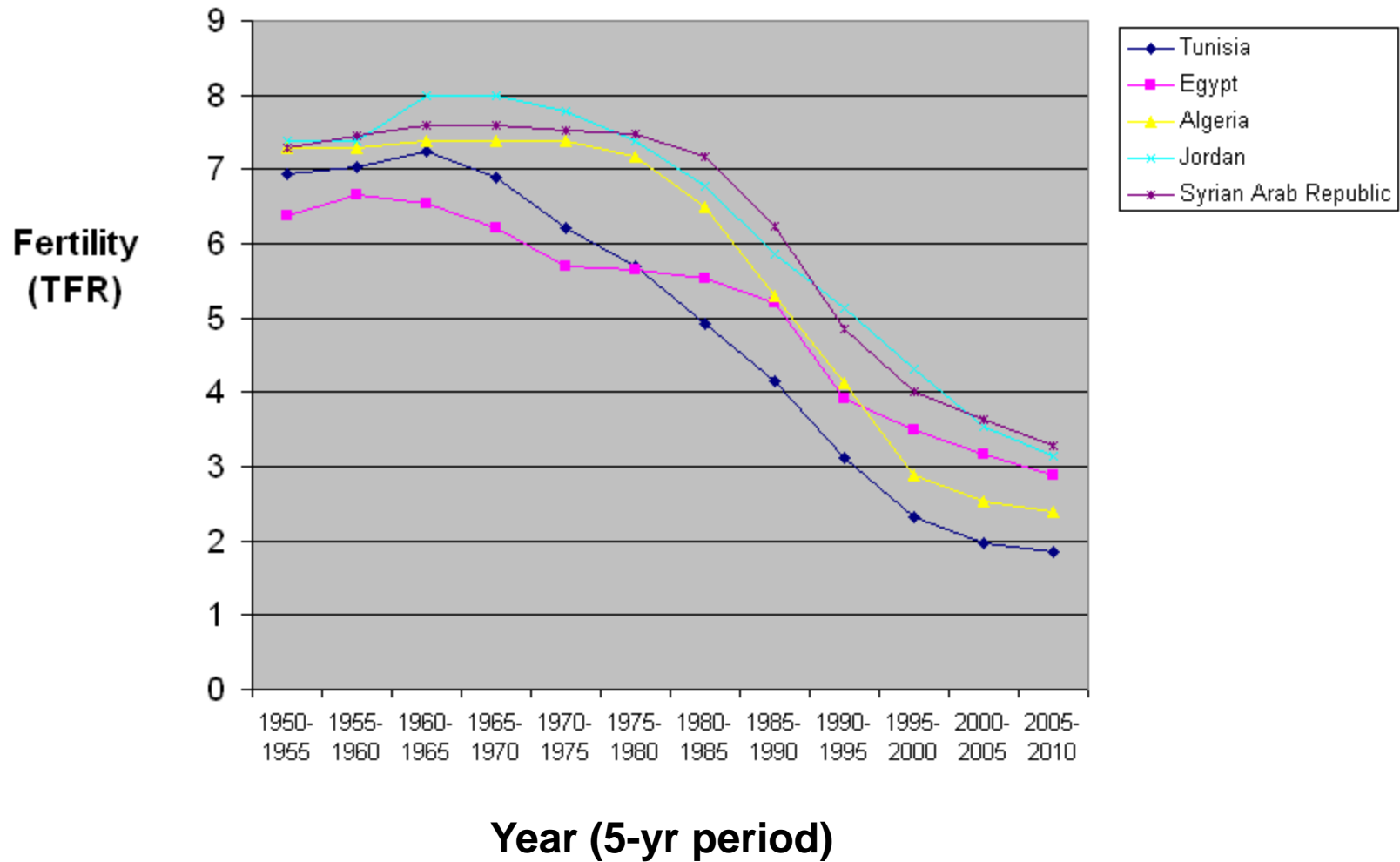
Demographer-in-residence  
The Stimson Center

[rcincotta@stimson.org](mailto:rcincotta@stimson.org)

Presented at:

**Center for Strategic & International Studies**

6 July 2011



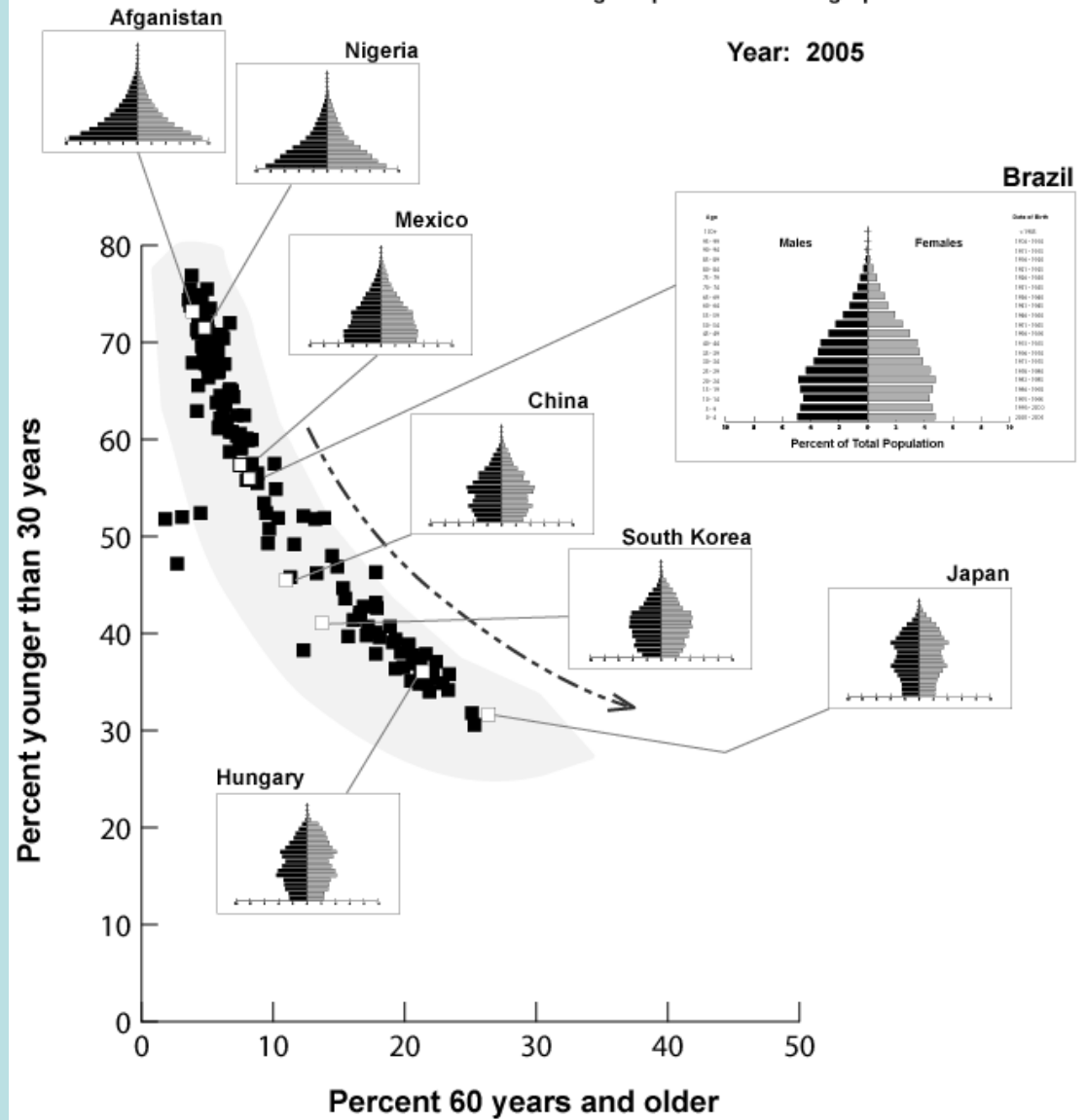
# Transitional

## Population age structures

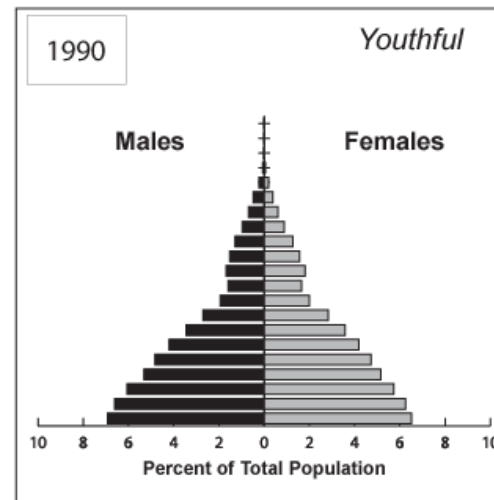
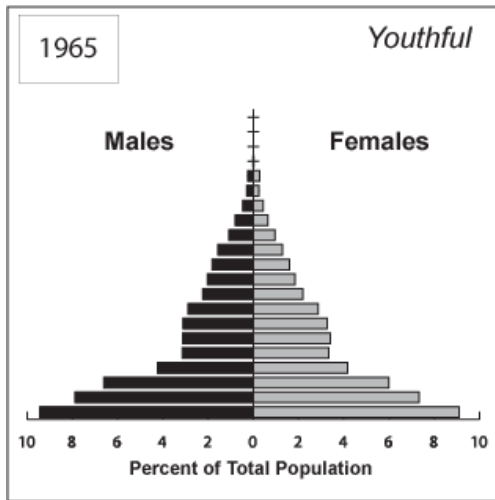
2005

# Transitional Age Structures along the path of the demographic transition

Year: 2005

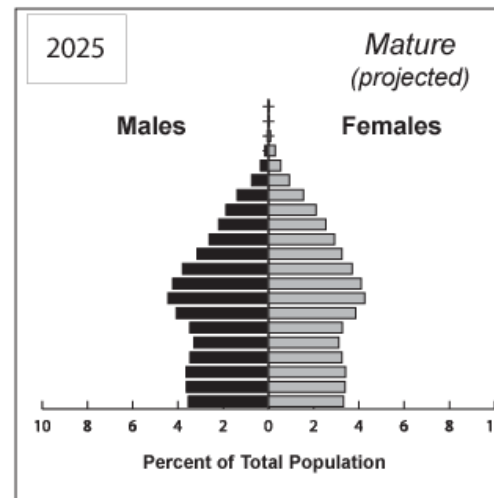
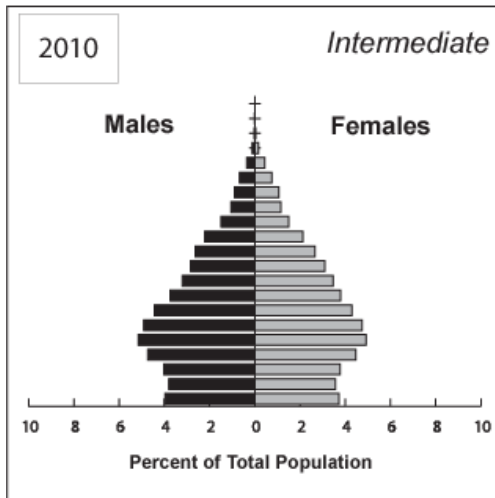


# Tunisia



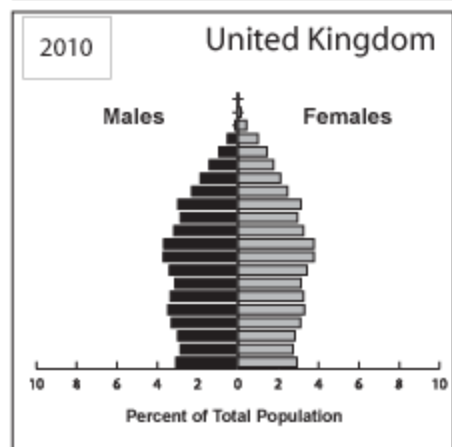
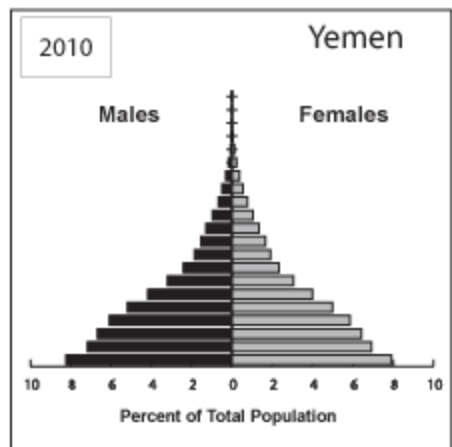
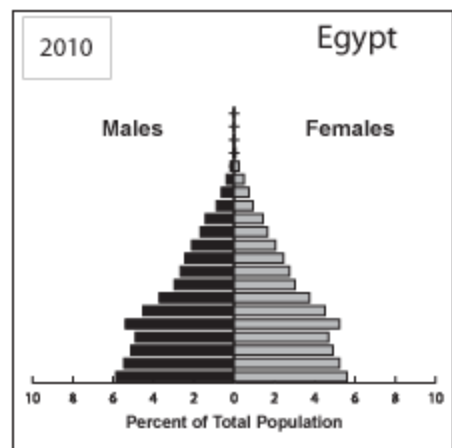
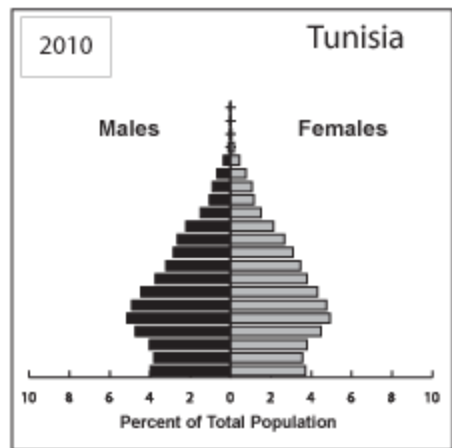
Age

100+  
95-99  
90-94  
85-89  
80-84  
75-79  
70-74  
65-69  
60-64  
55-59  
50-54  
45-49  
40-44  
35-39  
30-34  
25-29  
20-24  
15-19  
10-14  
5-9  
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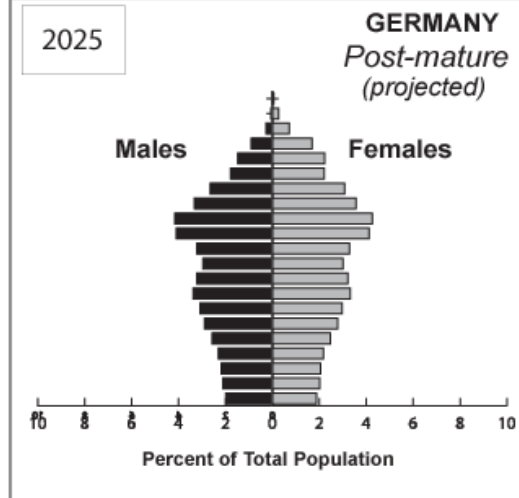
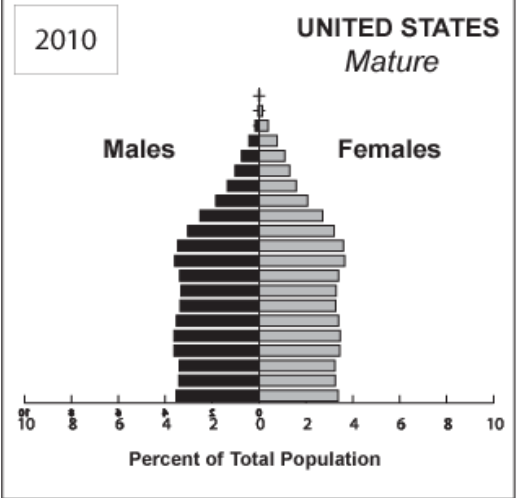
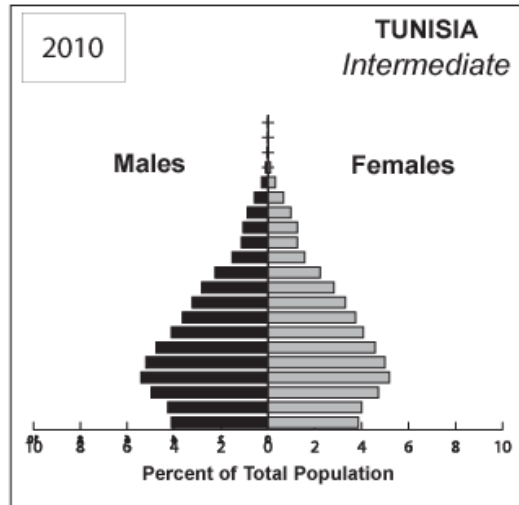
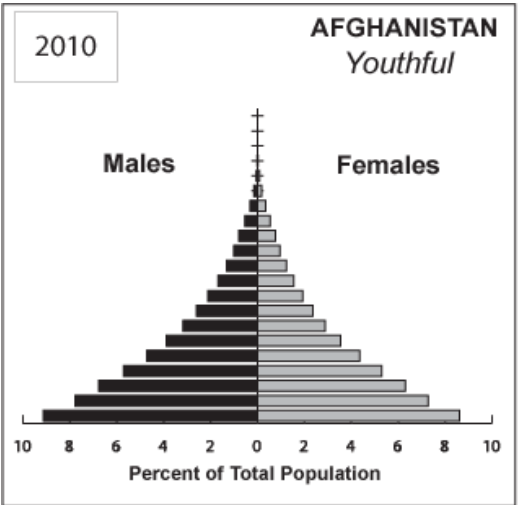


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Figure 2. Population age structures of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and the UK in 2010.  
Data Source: UN Population Division, 2009.

# Four categories: four individual countries



Age  
100+  
95 - 99  
90 - 94  
85 - 89  
80 - 84  
75 - 79  
70 - 74  
65 - 69  
60 - 64  
55 - 59  
50 - 54  
45 - 49  
40 - 44  
35 - 39  
30 - 34  
25 - 29  
20 - 24  
15 - 19  
10 - 14  
5 - 9  
0 - 4

# ISRAEL: Shifting composition in a relatively stable age structure

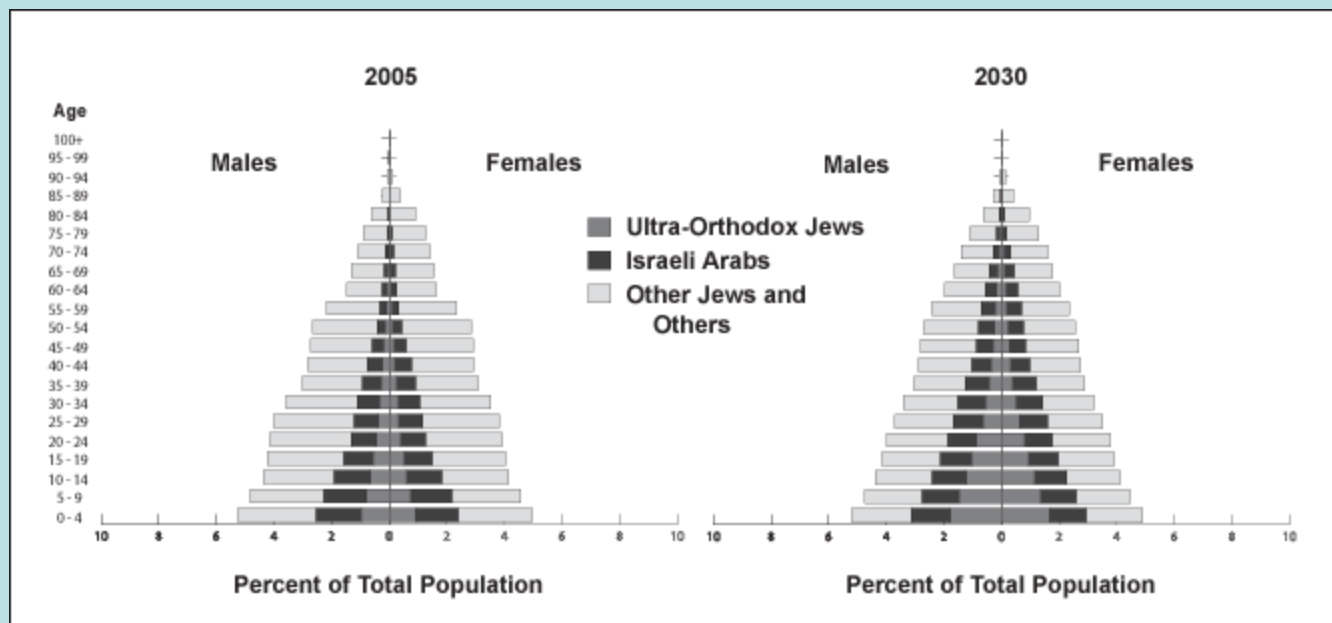


Fig. 3. Projected changes in the composition of Israel's age structure, 2005 to 2030.

## **Hobbesian (or Authoritarian) Bargain Hypothesis:**

Citizens are willing to cede political rights and civil liberties for physical and economic security.

*[corollary: things are peaceful, I want my rights back]*

## **Youth Bulge Hypothesis:**

Populations with large proportions of young adults in their working-age population are at an elevated risk of political violence due to the ease of recruitment.

- (a) rapid rate of workforce growth, unemployment
- (b) culture typified by experimentation/passion/interest in novelty, idealism, risk-taking, ideological naïveté, and creativity.



Youthful



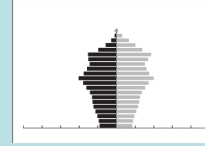
Intermediate



Mature



Post-Mature



**Net  
Benefits**

*Unconstrained  
executive power*

*Civil liberties &  
political rights*

15

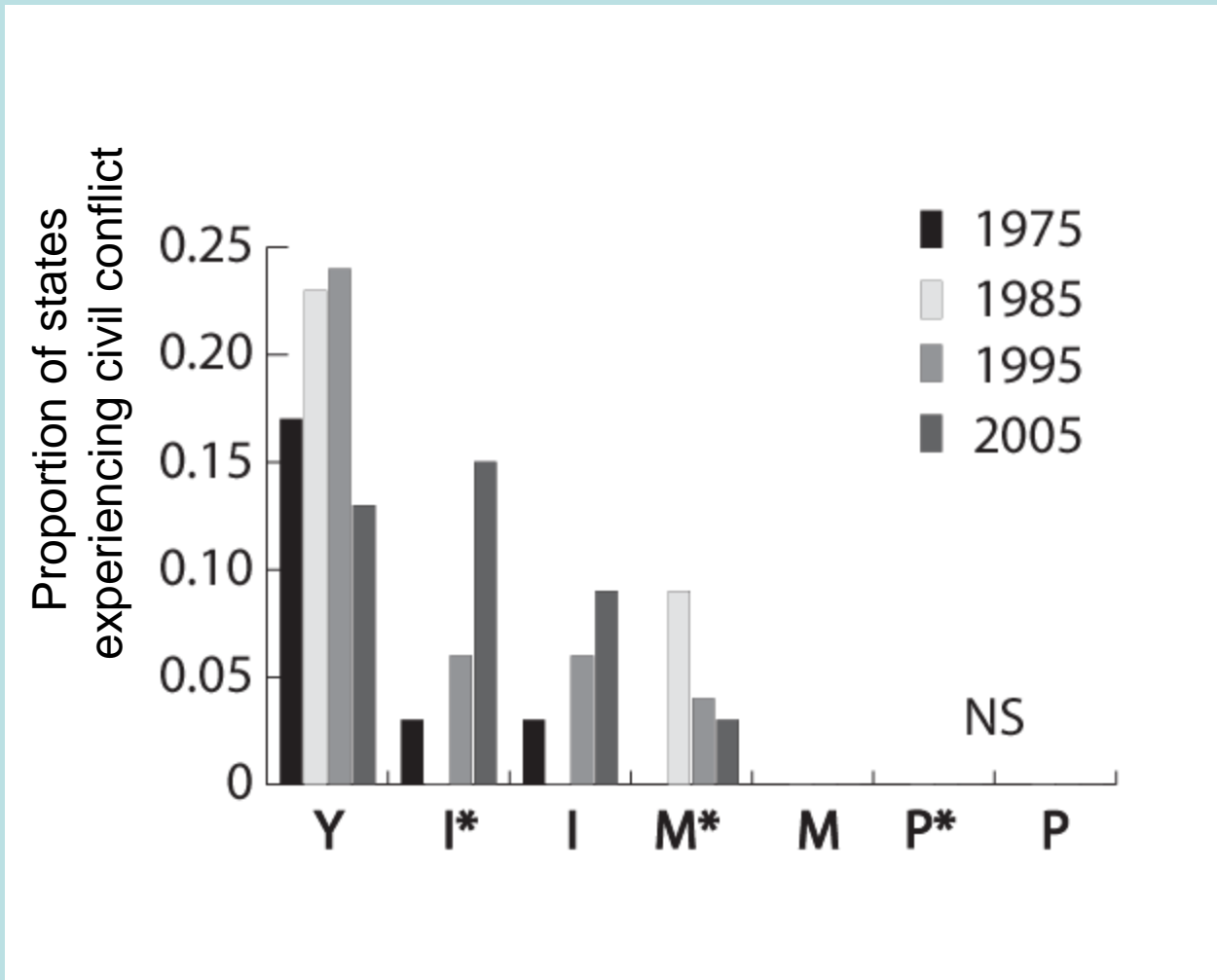
25

35

45

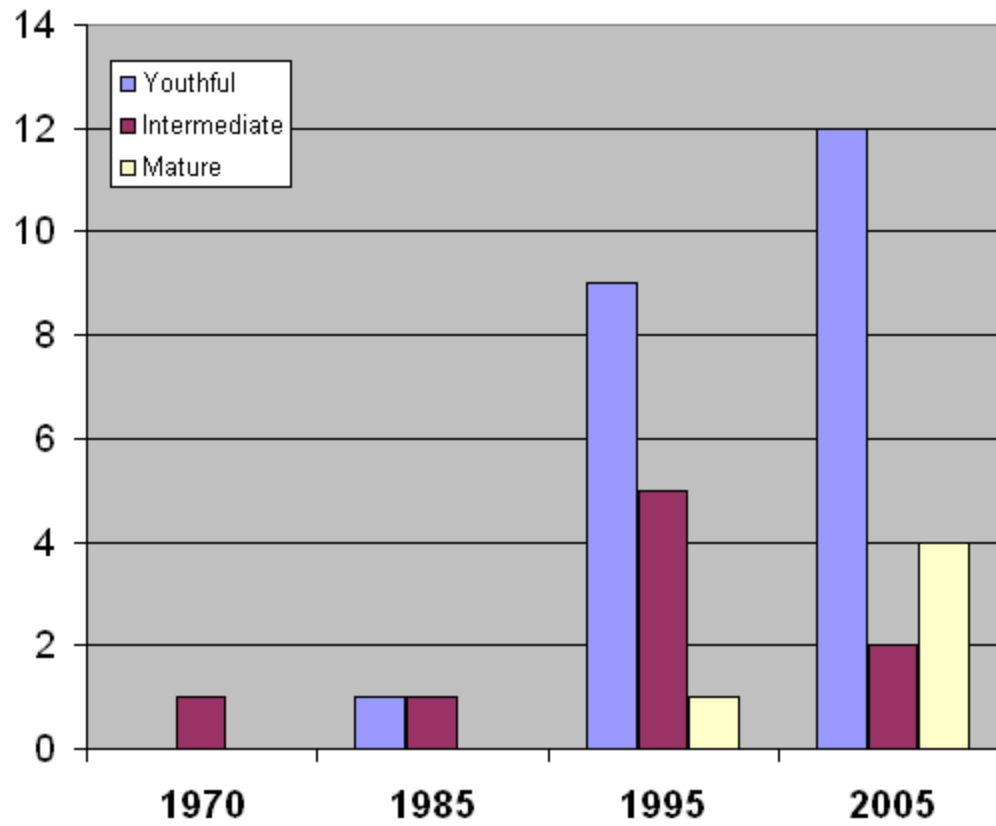
55

**Median Age  
(Years)**

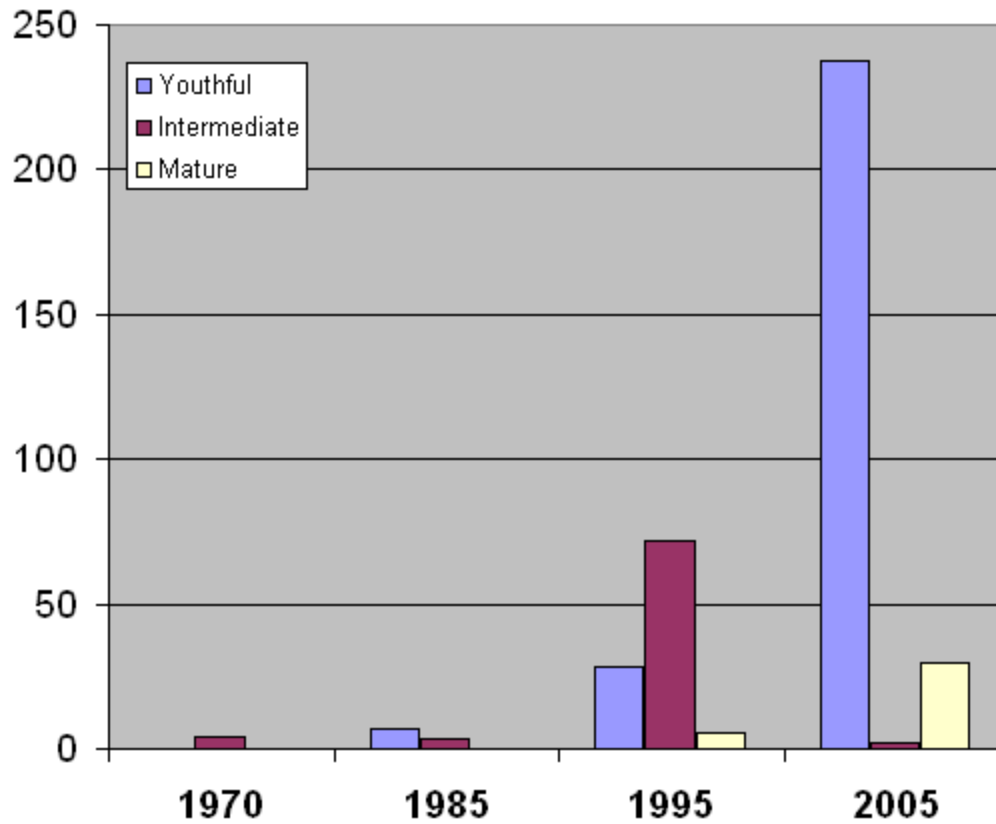


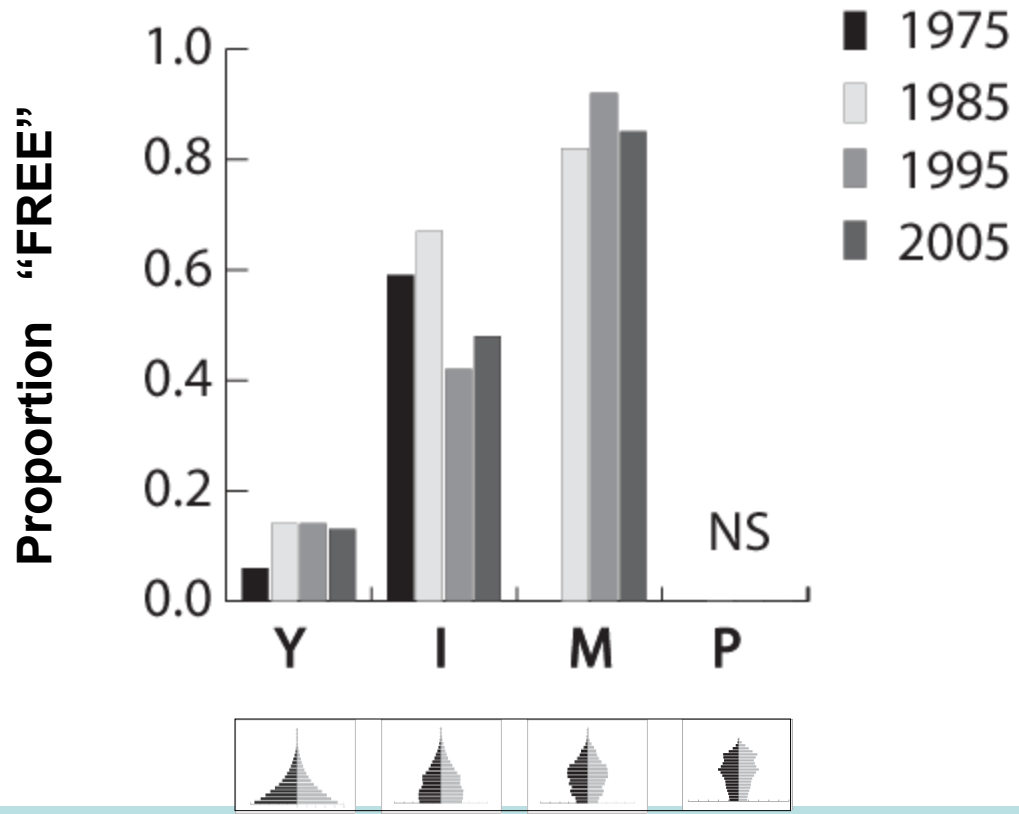
\* *Conflict involves a more youthful minority*

**PKO  
Recipient  
States**



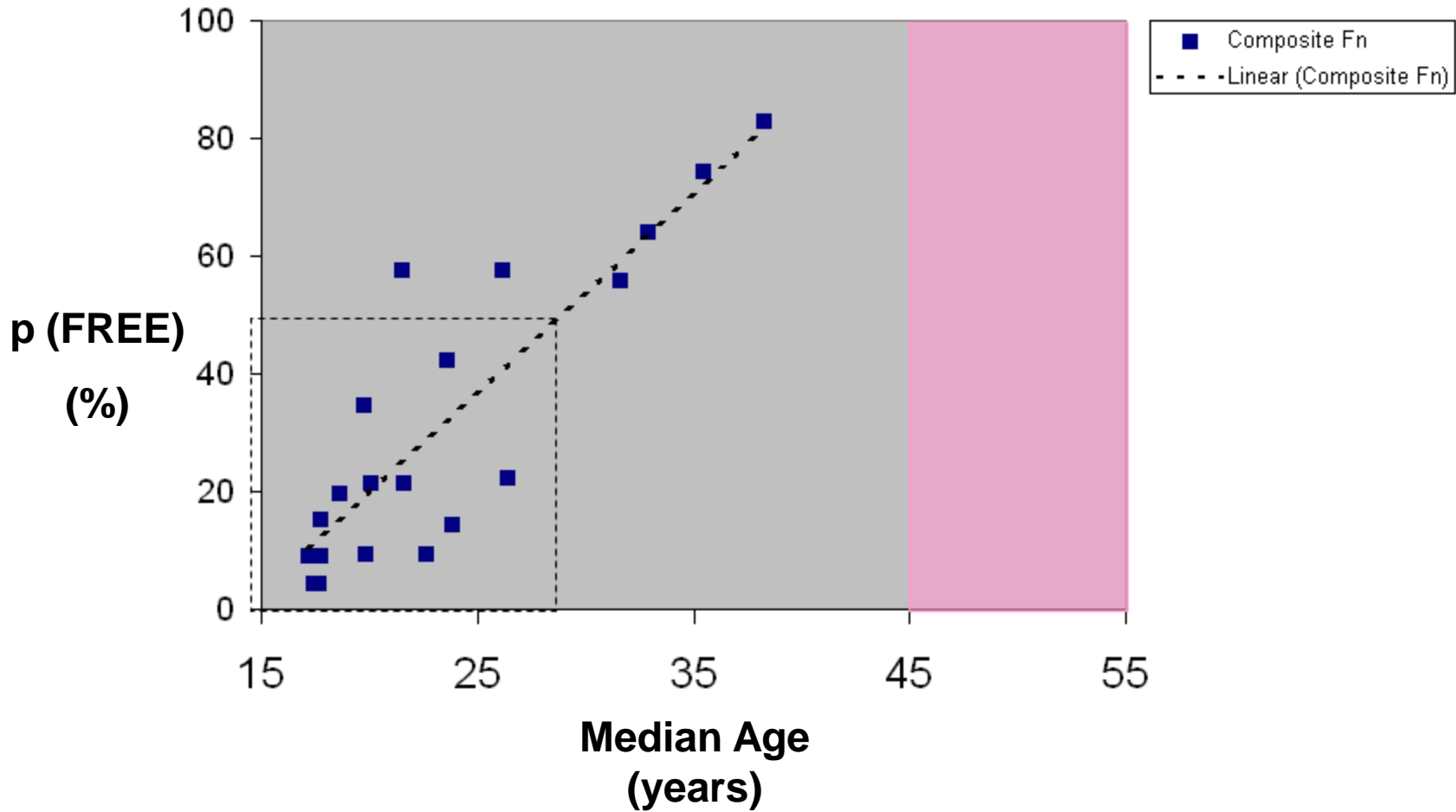
**Deployed  
PKO  
Personnel  
(thousands)**





$$p(\text{Free}) = 3.40(\text{MA}) - 48.3$$

$$r^2 = 0.75$$



# Youth bulges and the path to liberal democracy: 8 selected states

Some anecdotal evidence of rises as youth bulge declines.

Figure 1

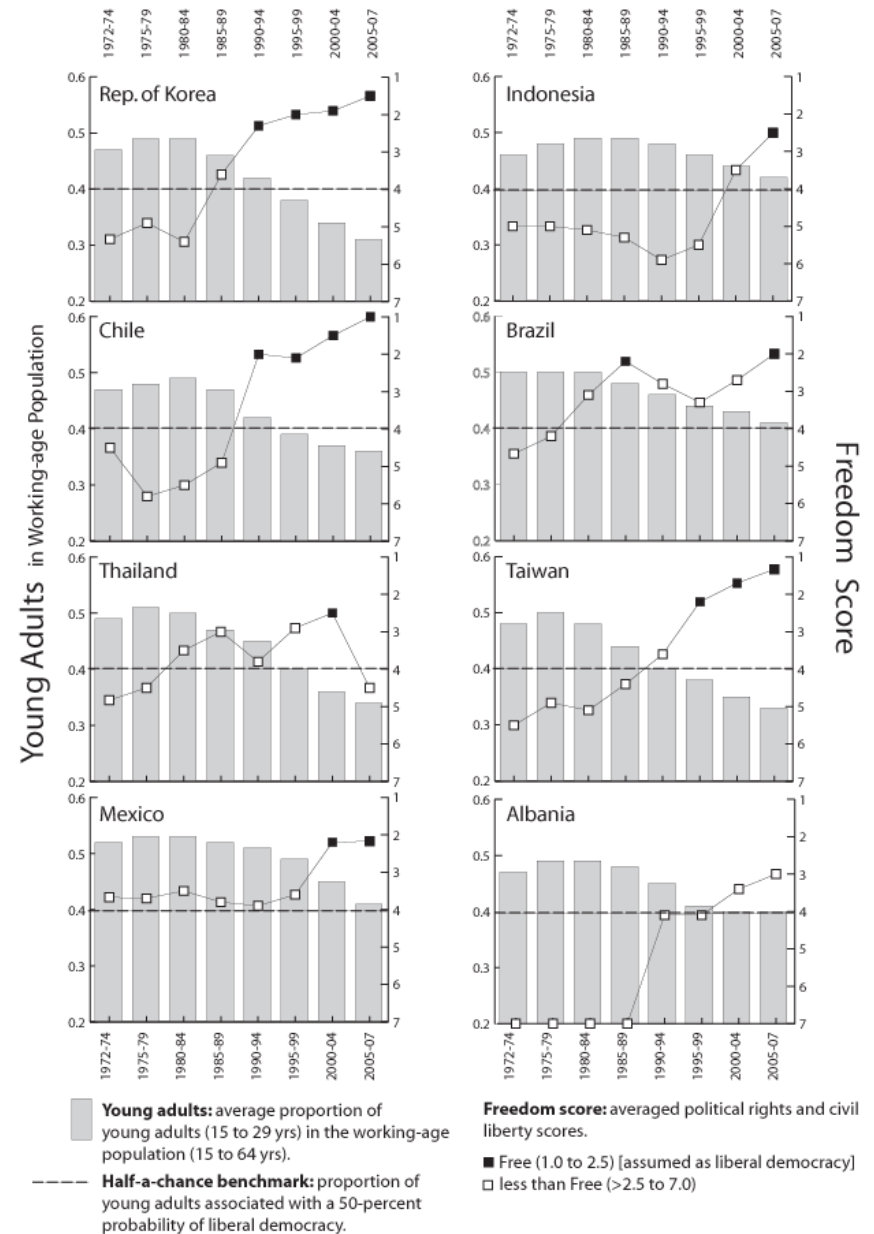
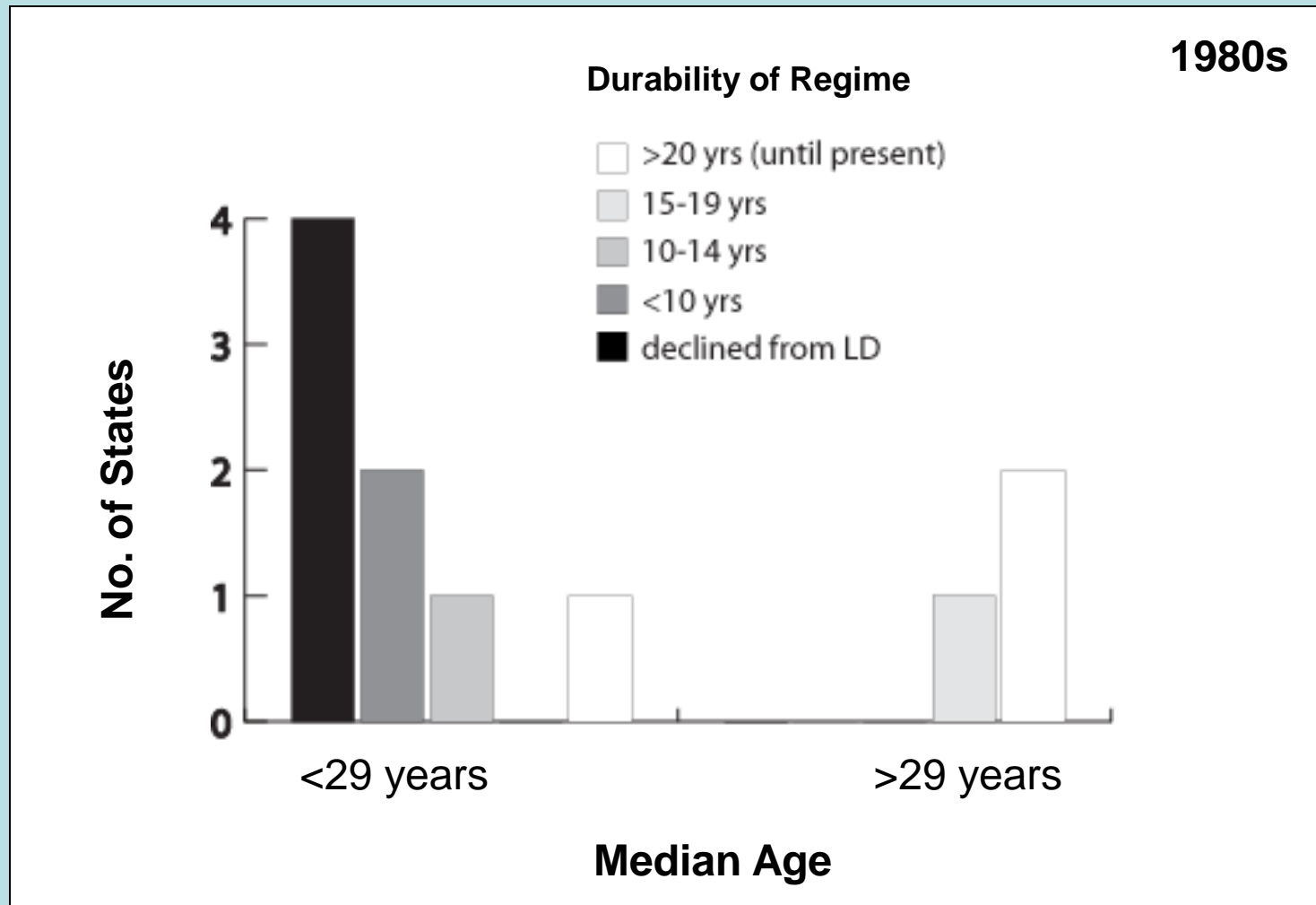


Figure 1. Trends in the proportion of young adults in the working-age population and freedom scores in eight recently democratized and democratizing countries. Data sources: Freedom House (2008); UN Population Division (2007); Executive Yuan, Republic of China (2008).

# Why does this model work?

Fate of States rising to liberal democracy during the decade





	Median Age (2010)	Probability of Liberal Democracy (FREE) (2010)	YEAR of a 50% Chance (MA=28.9) (UN Medium Variant, 2009)	Current FH Assessment (2010)	Current FH Score
Cyprus	36.5	0.76	1986	<i>Free (since 1981)</i>	1.0
Lebanon	29.2	0.51	2009	<i>Partly Free</i>	4.0
Tunisia	29.1	0.51	2011	<i>Not Free</i>	6.0
Turkey	28.3	0.48	2012	<i>Partly Free</i>	3.0
Iran	26.8	0.43	2014	<i>Not Free</i>	6.0
Algeria	26.2	0.41	2017	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Morocco	26.2	0.41	2017	<i>Partly Free</i>	4.5
Libya	26.2	0.41	2020	<i>Not Free</i>	7.0
Qatar	24.2	0.34	? (no projections)	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Egypt	23.9	0.33	2026	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Bahrain	23.0	0.30	? (no projections)	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Jordan	22.8	0.29	2028	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Syria	22.5	0.28	2031	<i>Not Free</i>	6.5
Oman	19.7	0.19	? (no projections)	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
United Arab Emirates	19.6	0.18	? (no projections)	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Kuwait	19.5	0.18	? (no projections)	<i>Partly Free</i>	4.5
Saudi Arabia	19.4	0.18	? (no projections)	<i>Not Free</i>	6.5
Iraq	19.3	0.17	~2040	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Yemen	17.8	0.12	>2040	<i>Not Free</i>	5.5
Palestinian Territories	17.6	0.11	>2040	<i>Occupied</i>	x
20	23.9	6			
<i>States</i>	<i>Mean Median Age</i>	<i>Expected Liberal Democracies</i>			

# Model Predictions and Observations:

1. *Not ready for liberal democracy?* Liberal democracies should be rare and unstable among youthful age structures (median age  $\leq 25.0$ ).

2007 (8), 2010 (6), decline of 25%

2. From 2010 to 2019. Expect half of the states to pass through 50-50 benchmark to rise to liberal democracy (FH “Free”).

Two regional clusters of non-liberal states:

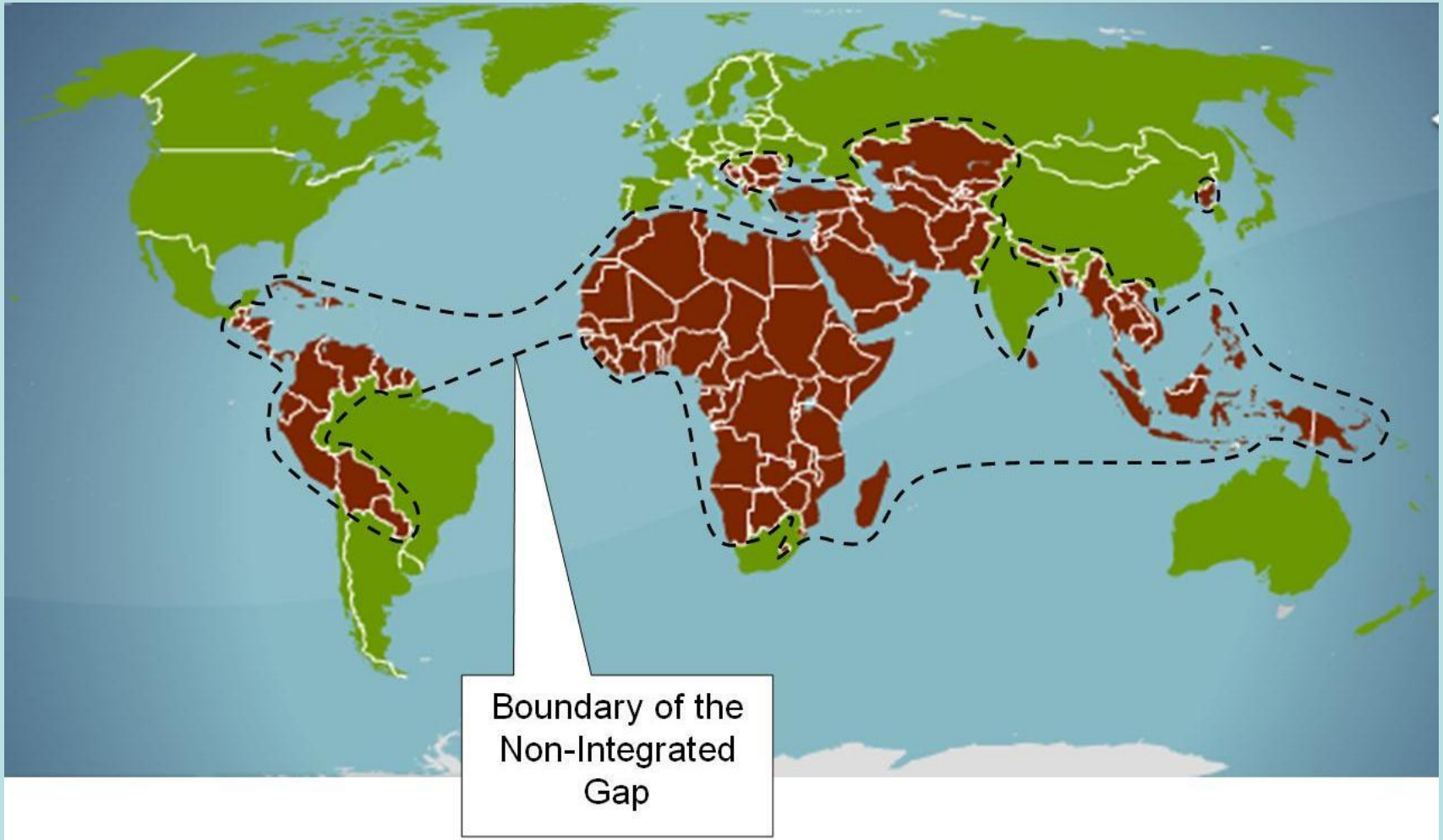
*North Africa (Morocco to Egypt)*

*northwest corner of South America (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador)*

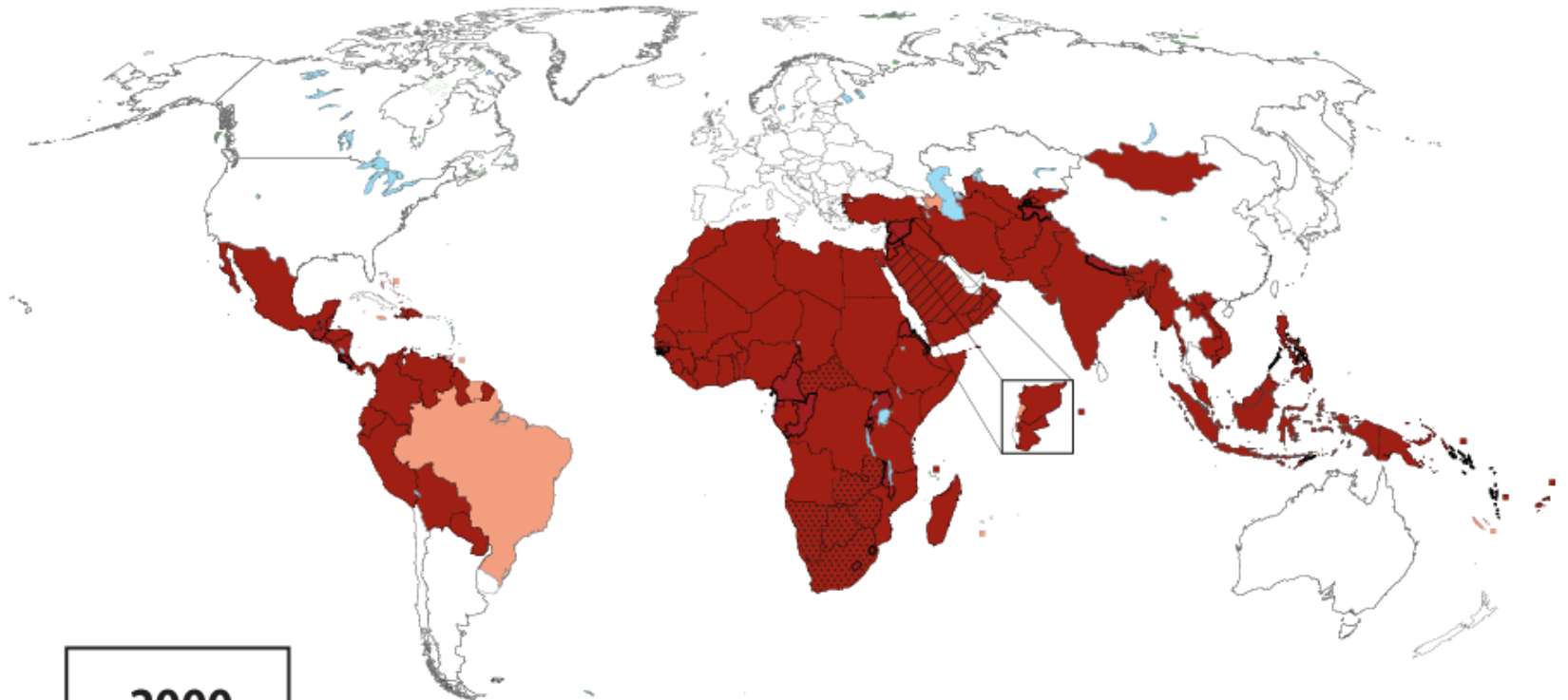
3. *Age isn't enough.* Liberal democracies should prevail among age-structurally mature countries (median age  $> 35.0$ ) and should be stable.

2007 (32), 2009 (33), 2010 (32), decline of 3% last year

89 % of age-structurally mature countries are “free”





# Youthful states





2000

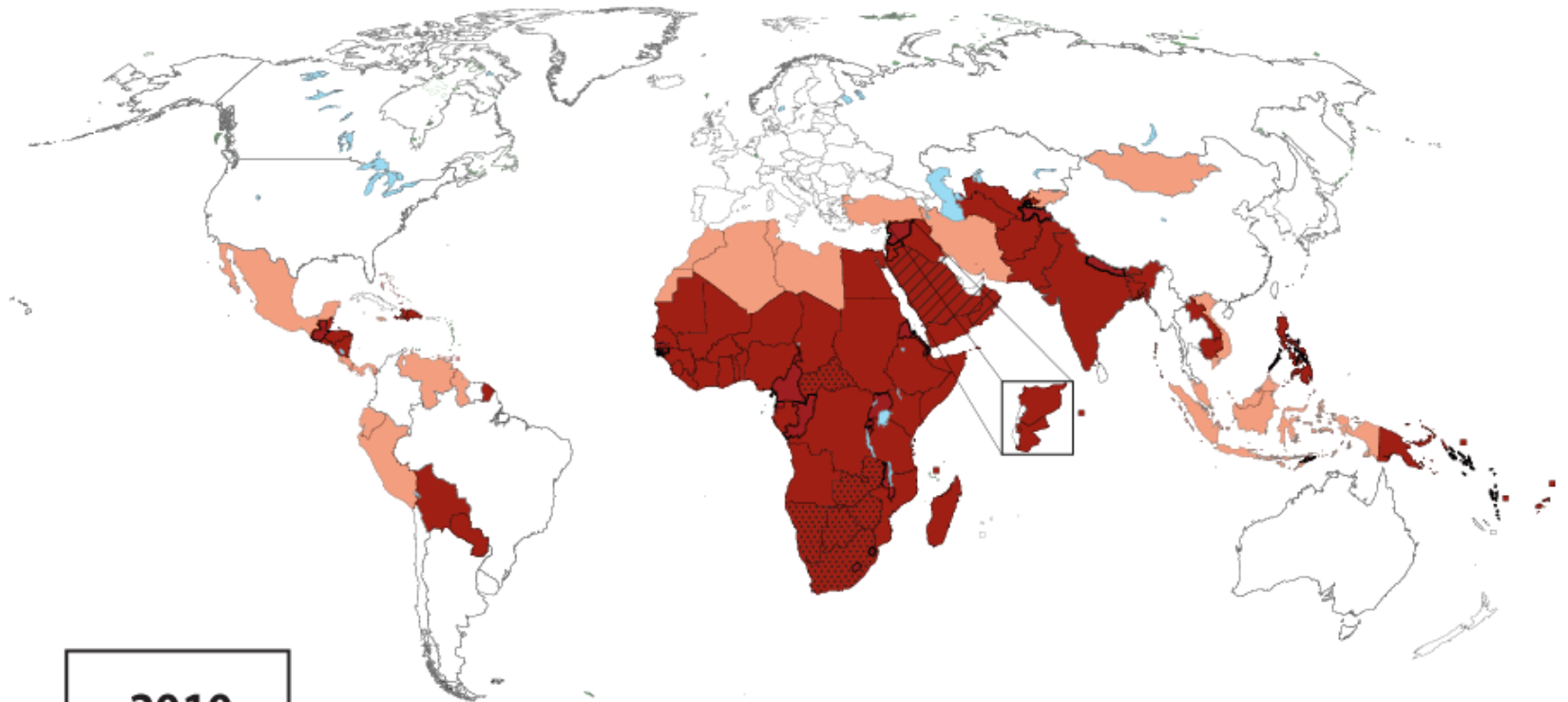
## Youthful Age Structures

median age  $\leq 25.0$

-  Within category
-  Recently departed category

-  AIDS-influenced age structure
-  Temporary migrant-influenced age structure

# Youthful states



2010

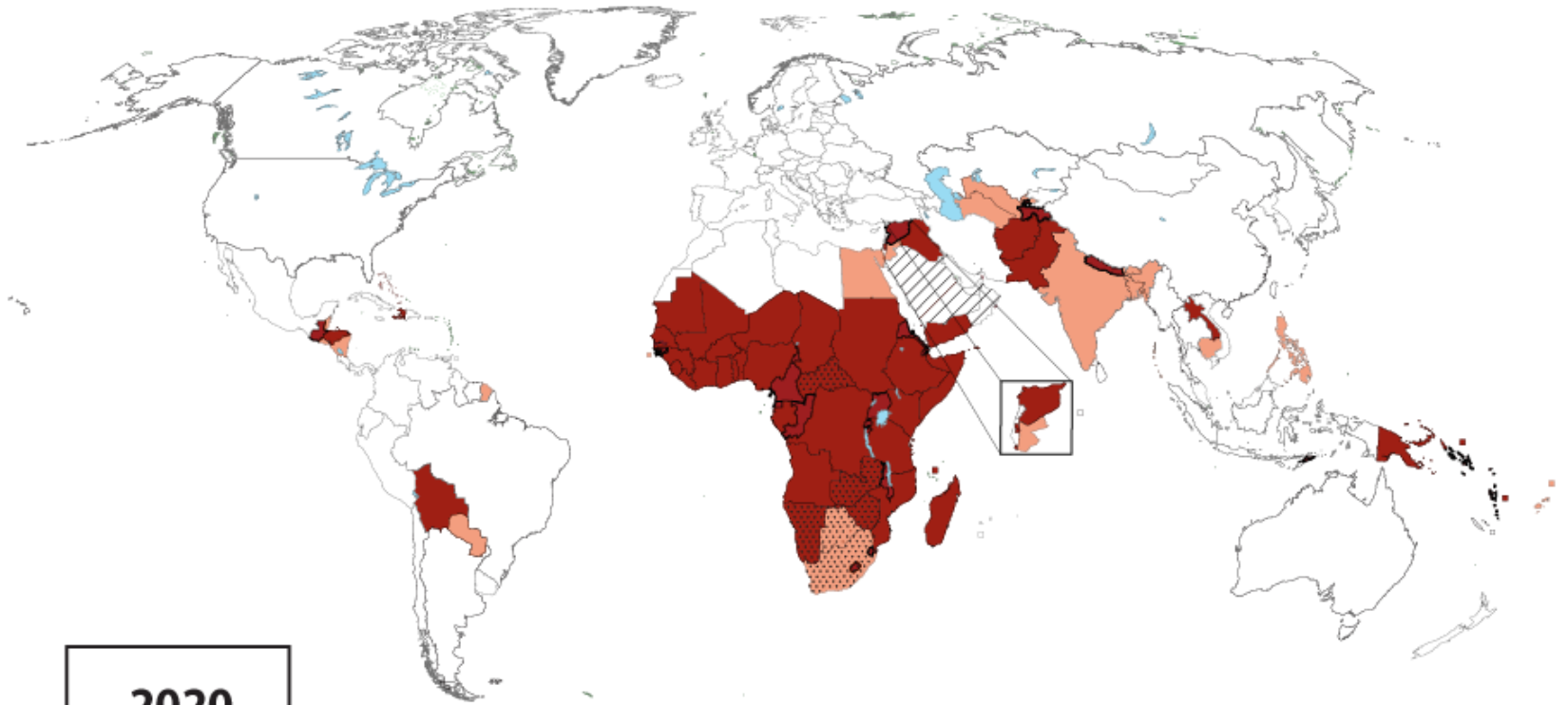
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# Youthful states



2020

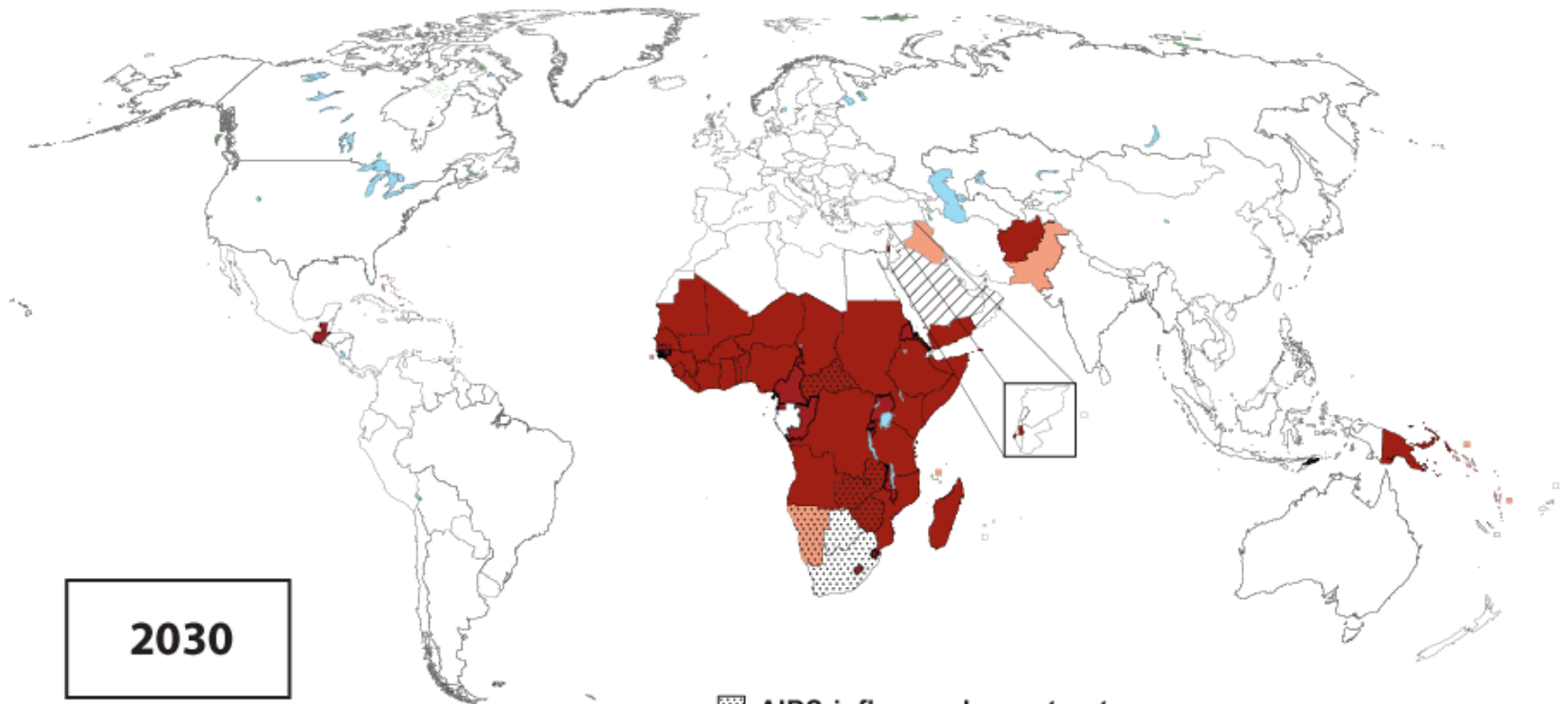
## Youthful Age Structures

median age  $\leq 25.0$

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- Recently departed category

- ▨ AIDS-influenced age structure
- ▧ Temporary migrant-influenced age structure



# Youthful states





2030

## Youthful Age Structures

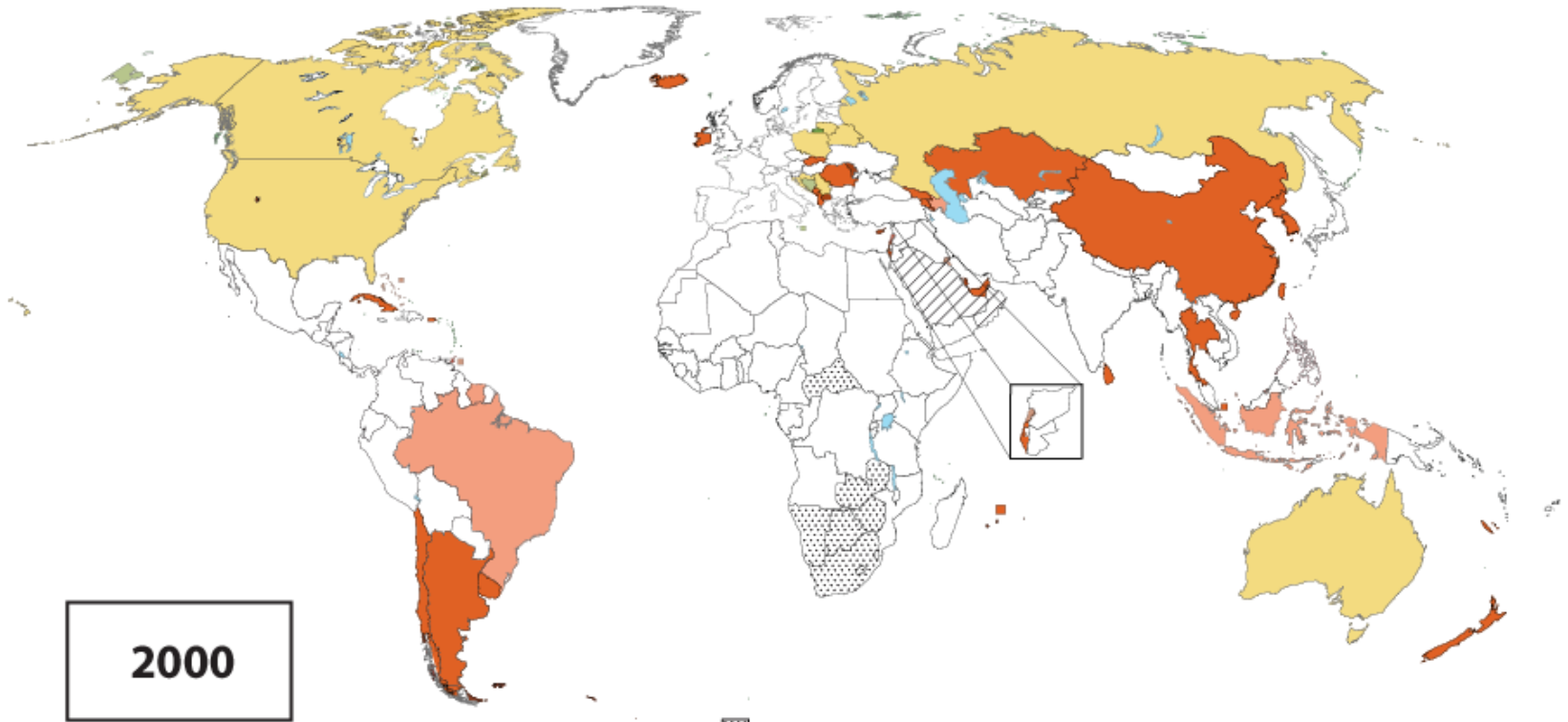
median age  $\leq 25.0$

-  AIDS-influenced age structure
-  Temporary migrant-influenced age structure

*The Demographic Arc of Instability*

-  Within category
-  Recently departed category

# Intermediate states



2000

## Intermediate Age Structures

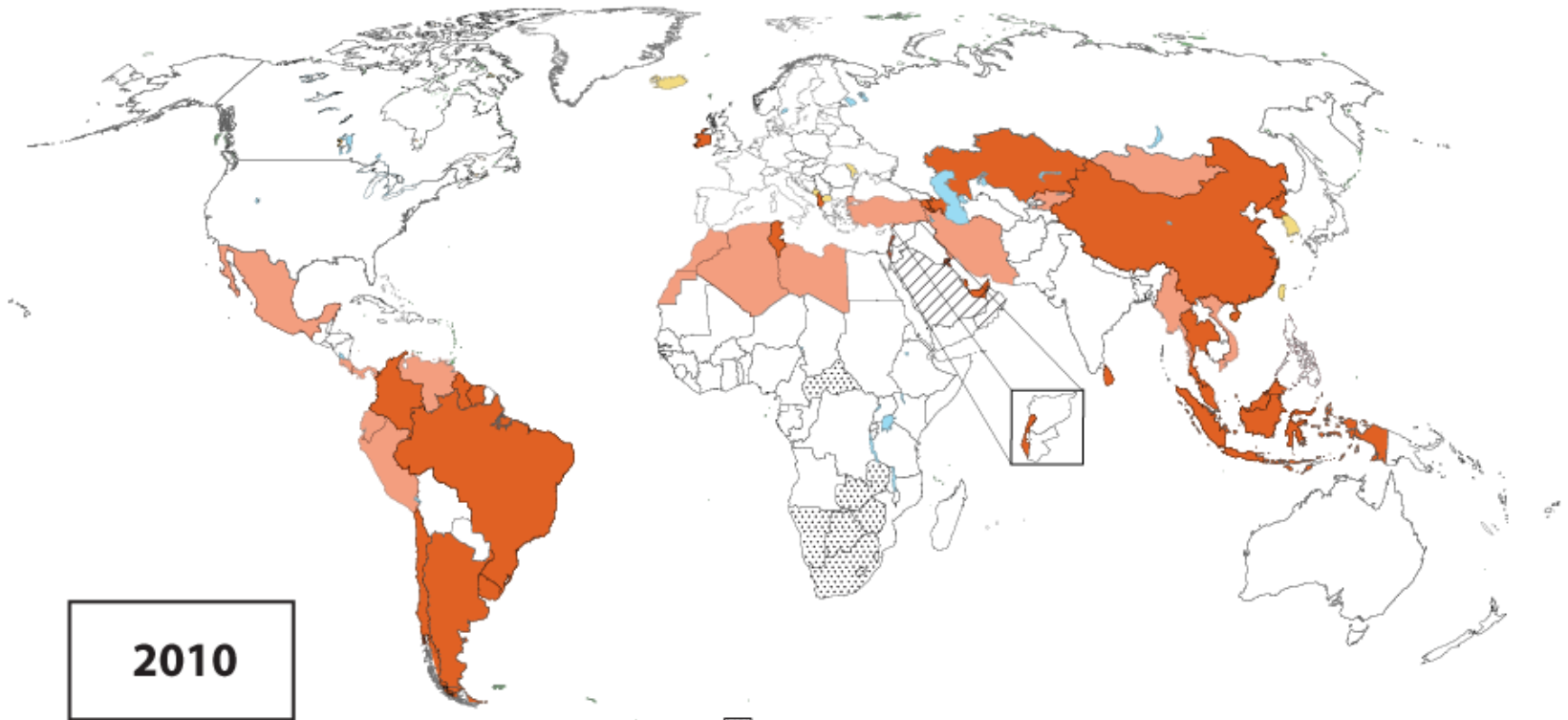
median age  $>25.0$  to  $\leq 35.0$

- Recently entered category
- Within category
- Recently departed category



- AIDS-influenced age structure
- Temporary migrant-influenced age structure



# Intermediate states






2010

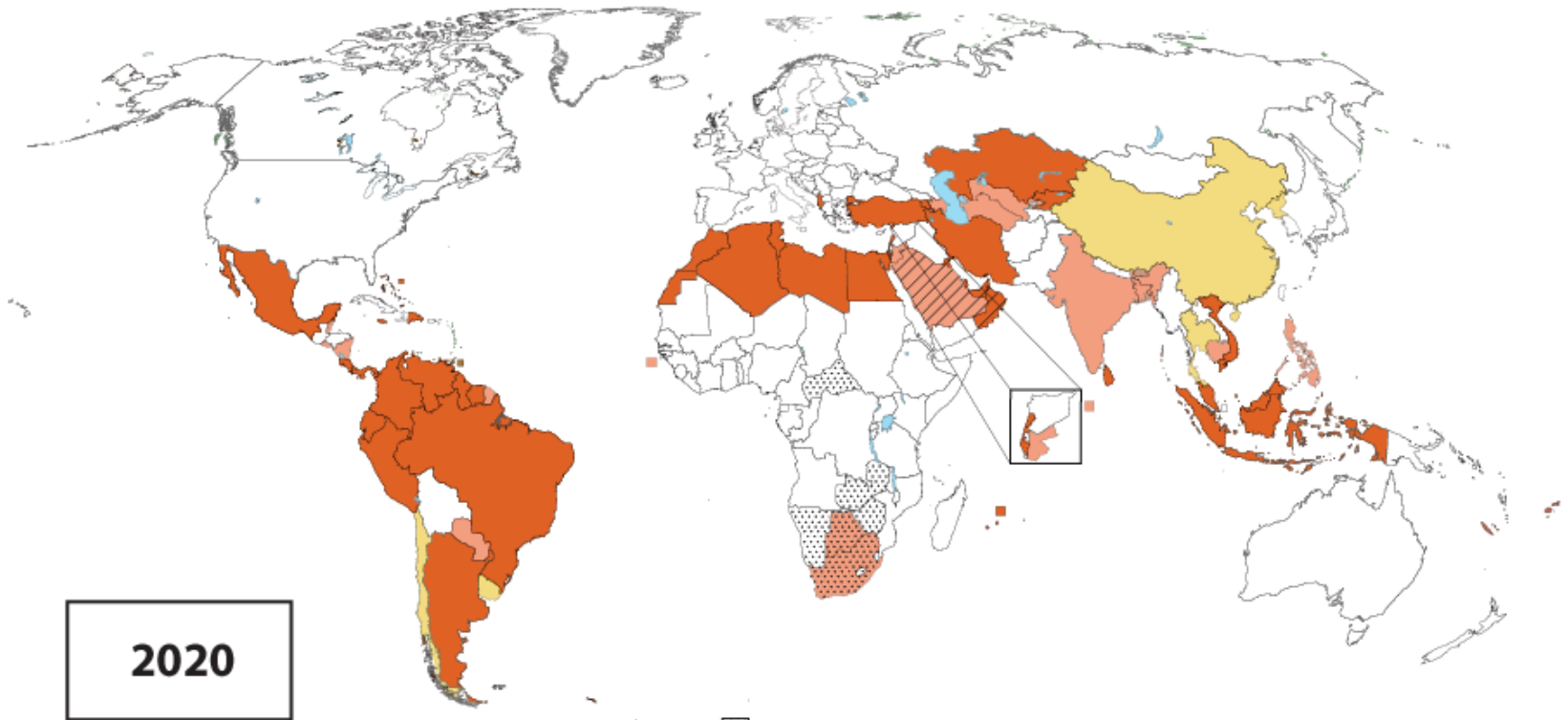
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-  Recently departed category

# Intermediate states



2020

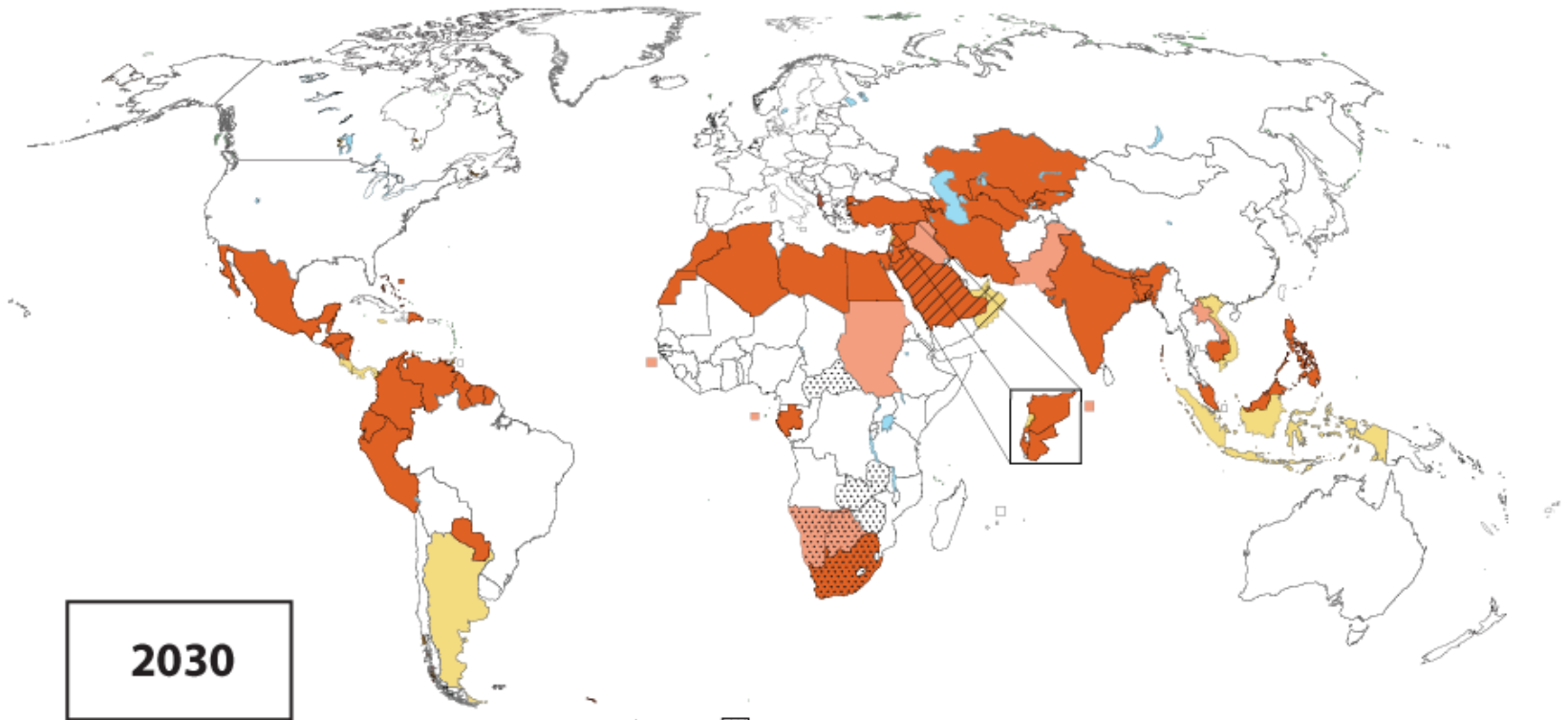
## Intermediate Age Structures

median age  $>25.0$  to  $\leq 35.0$

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# Intermediate states



2030

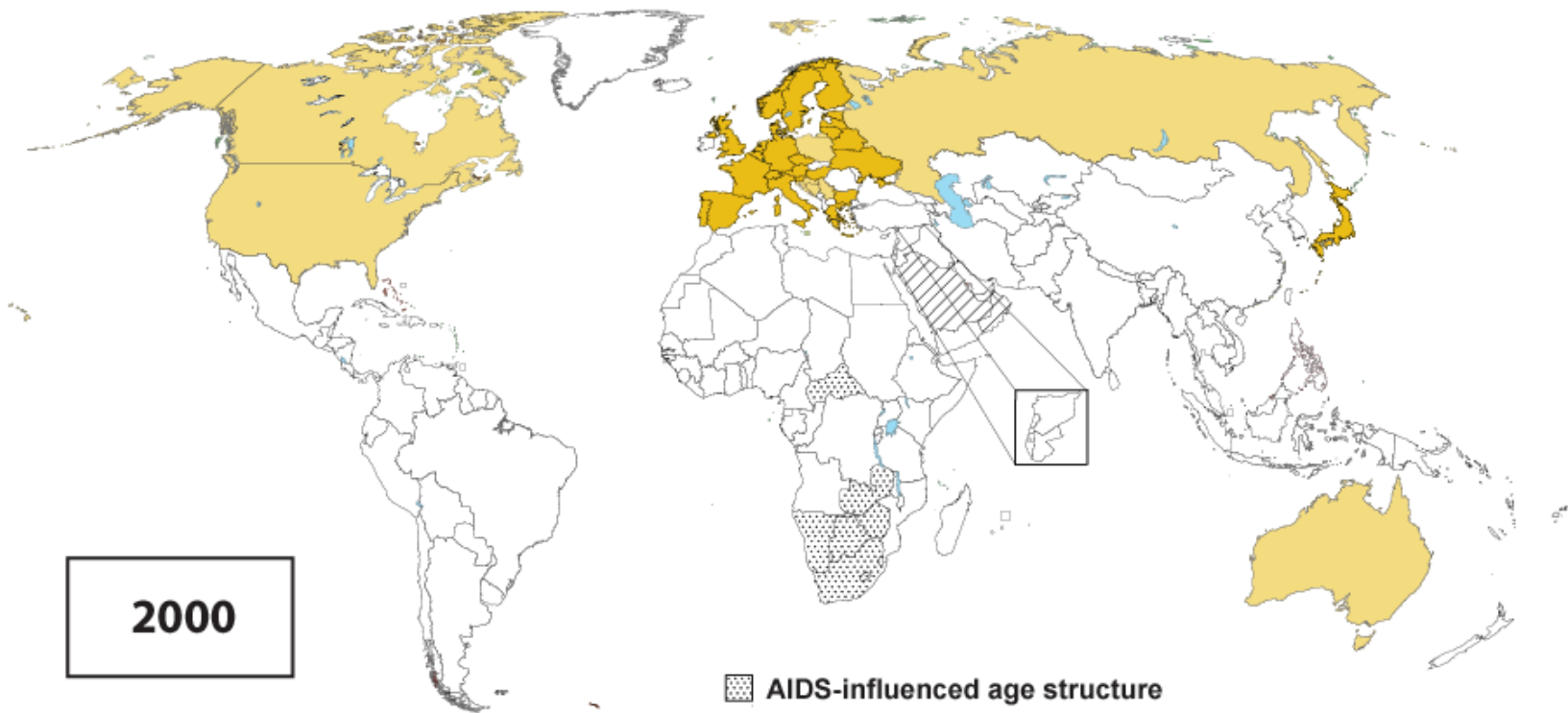
## Intermediate Age Structures

median age  $>25.0$  to  $\leq 35.0$

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- AIDS-influenced age structure
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# Mature states



2000

## Mature Age Structures

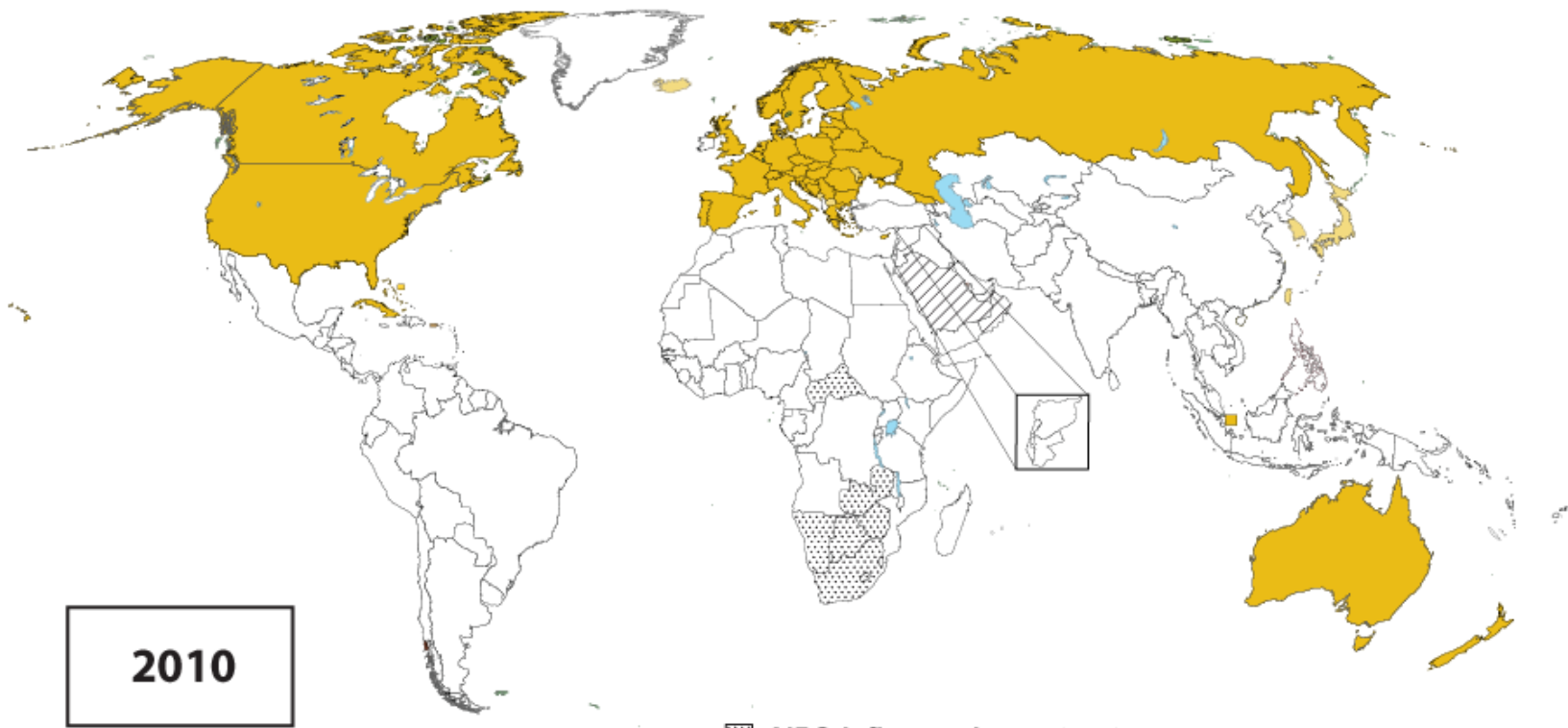
median age >35.0 to <45.0

- AIDS-influenced age structure
- Temporary migrant-influenced age structure

### The Demographic Turning Point

- Recently entered category
- Within category
- Recently departed category

# Mature states



2010

## Mature Age Structures

median age >35.0 to ≤45.0

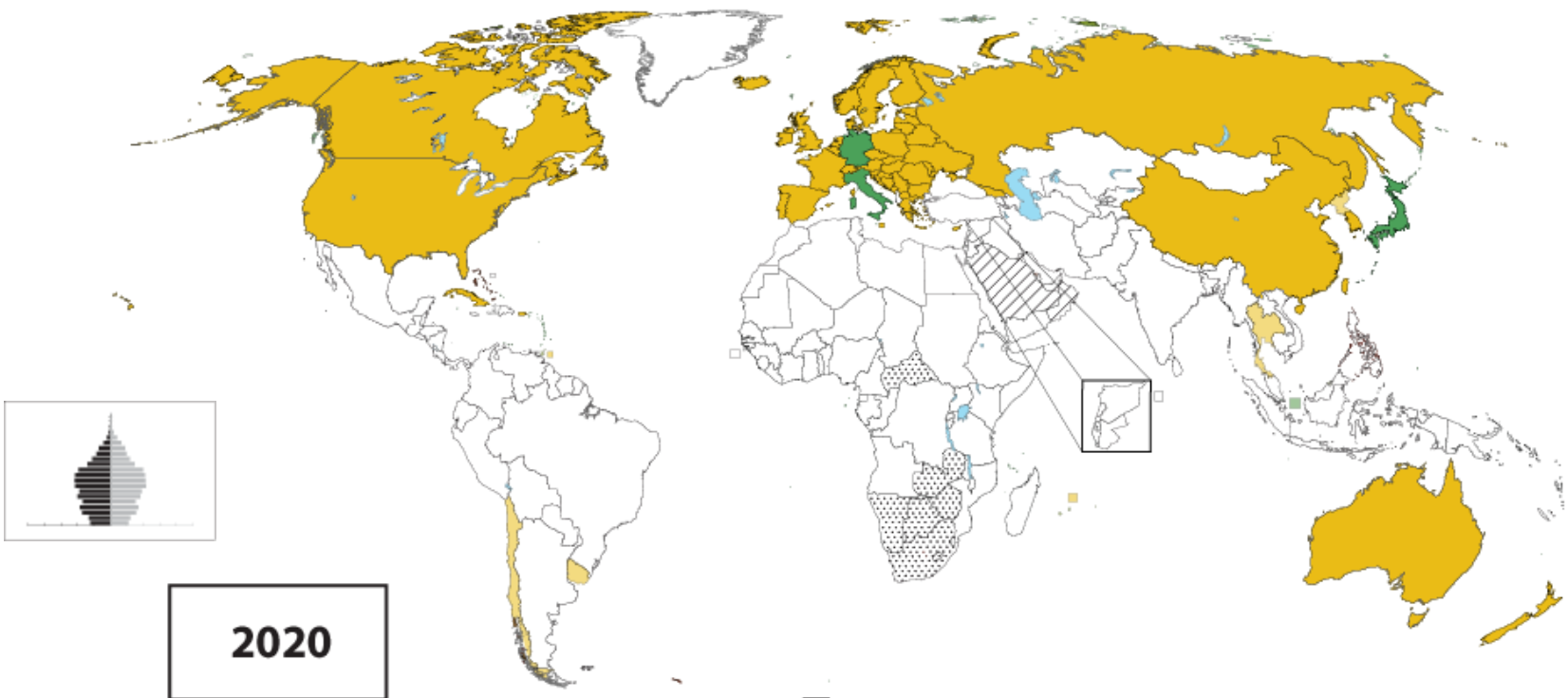
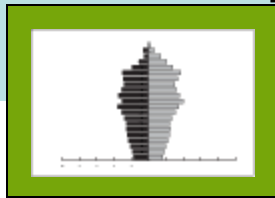
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# Mature states

# Post-mature states



## Mature Age Structures

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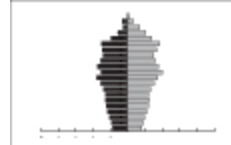
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## Post-Mature Age Structures

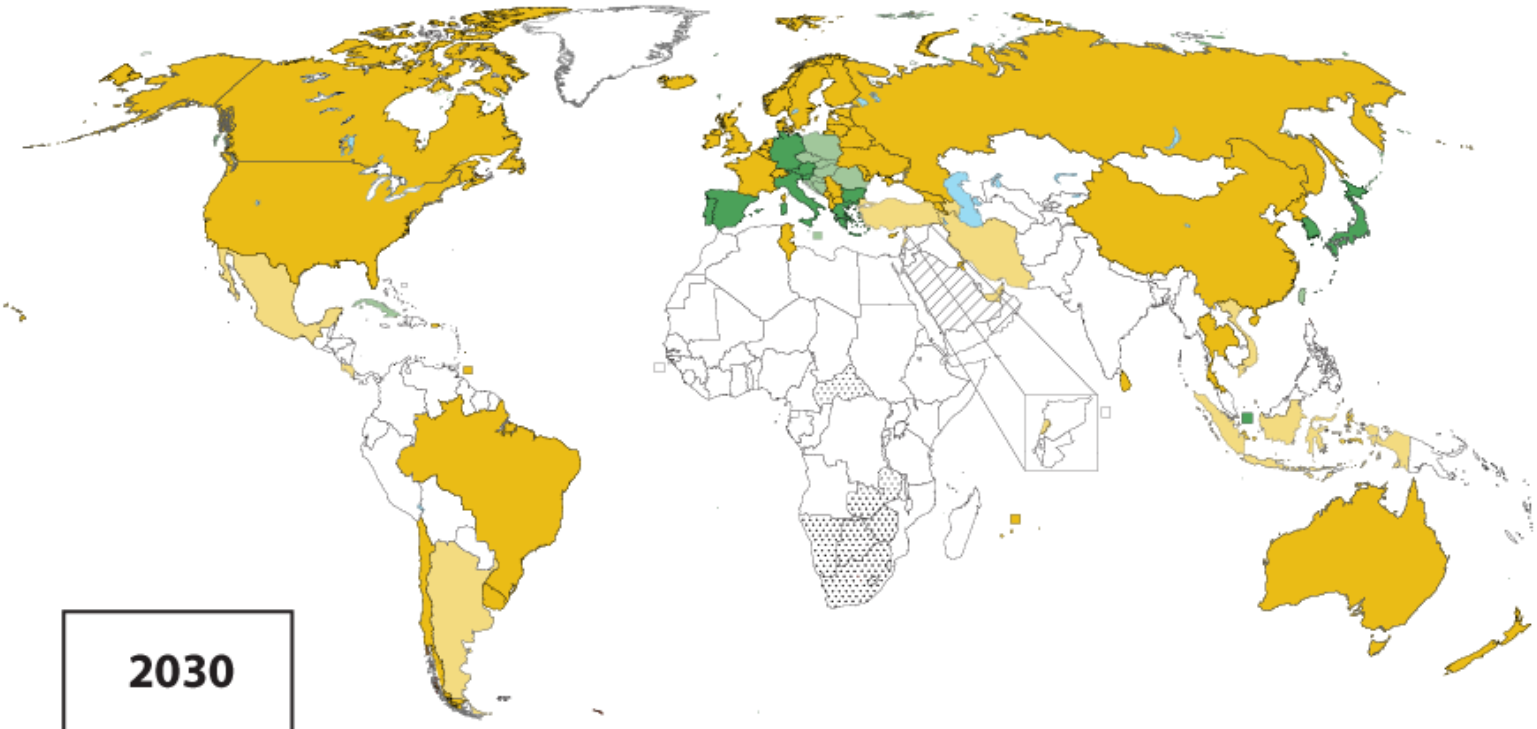
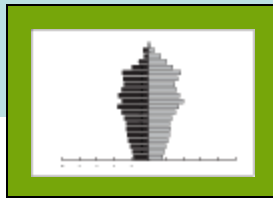
median age >45.0

- Recently entered category
- Within category



# Mature states

# Post-mature states



2030

## Mature Age Structures

median age >35.0 to <=45.0

- Recently entered category
- Within category
- Recently departed category

- AIDS-influenced age structure
- Temporary migrant-influenced age structure

## Post-Mature Age Structures

median age >45.0

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- Within category